

R 161427Z MAY 91
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1271
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL KADUNA
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE//ECJ4-SAA/POLAD/ECJ2//
USDAO ABIDJAN IV
USEUCOM AIDES VAHINGEN GE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 NIAMEY 04184

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/RA, AF/WF, AND NEA/AFN

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [LY](#) [NG](#)
SUBJECT: COUNTERING LIBYAN INFLUENCE IN NIGER

REF: A. STATE 146918 (NOTAL)
- B. STATE 150492 (NOTAL)
- C. BAMAKO 003325 (NOTAL)

[1](#)1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT

SUMMARY

[1](#)2. DESPITE NUMEROUS EFFORTS OVER THE YEARS BY THIS EMBASSY TO COUNTER QADDHAFI'S INFLUENCE IN NIGER, THE LIBYAN PRESENCE HAS STEADILY GROWN. THE SAIBOU REGIME CLINGS DESPERATELY TO ITS "GOOD-NEIGHBOR" POLICY, AND FEARS ANTAGONIZING QADDHAFI. ALSO THE NIGERIENS PERCEIVE TANGIBLE BENEFITS FROM THE LIBYAN PRESENCE--AND NO NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES. THEY CANNOT FIND A LIBYAN HAND IN LOCAL DISTURBANCES

[1](#)3. TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL APPROACH ON LIBYA, WE SHOULD LAY DOWN MARKERS WITH THE NEXT GOVERNMENT AND THE OTHER NEW POLITICAL STRUCTURES IN NIGER, INCLUDING PARTIES AND UNIONS, ABOUT LIBYAN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA. BRIEFERS SHOULD SPEND MORE TIME ON CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF LIBYAN SUBVERSION IN AND THROUGH AFRICAN STATES, THAN ON MARGINAL ISSUES IN NIGER SUCH AS CW AND PALESTINIAN TERRORISM. END SUMMARY

LIBYAN INFLUENCE GROWS DESPITE US DEMARCHES

[1](#)4. COUNTERING LIBYAN INFLUENCE IN NIGER HAS BEEN AMONG THIS EMBASSY'S HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR YEARS. WHILE WE HAVE READY ACCESS TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, AND HAVE MADE INNUMERABLE DEMARCHES ON LIBYA, BOTH GENERAL AND SPECIFIC, WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO ARREST THE INEXORABLE GROWTH OF THE LIBYAN PRESENCE IN THIS COUNTRY.

[1](#)5. TWO FACTORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO LIBYA'S SUCCESS. FIRST, THE SAIBOU GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MORE INCLINED THAN ITS PREDECESSOR TO PURSUE A "GOOD-NEIGHBOR" POLICY TOWARDS QADDHAFI. THE REGIME'S REASONING IS THAT IT GAINS NOTHING BY ANTAGONIZING LIBYA, EXCEPT FOR A GREATER CERTITUDE THAT IT WILL ACT AGAINST NIGERIEN INTERESTS. WITH QADDHAFI NEXT DOOR, AND A COMPLETELY OPEN EXPANSE OF DESERT FOR A BORDER, LIBYAN "DIRTY TRICKS" IN NIGER WOULD BE MERE CHILD'S PLAY.

¶6. SECOND, THE EXPANDED LIBYAN PRESENCE IN NIGER HAS NOT YET HAD ANY CONCRETE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, AND IN FACT HAS PRODUCED A NUMBER OF POSITIVE ONES FROM THE NIGERIEN PERSPECTIVE. FIRST, THE NIGERIENS OBSERVE MORE LIBYAN COMMERCIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN THEIR COUNTRY, WHICH THEY EQUATE WITH INCOME FOR NIGER, OR AT LEAST FOR SOME NIGERIENS.

¶7. THEY ALSO SEE LIBYAN ASSISTANCE FROM TIME TO TIME, WHICH, ALTHOUGH NOT MUCH, IS MORE THAN THEY GET FROM ANY OTHER MAGHREB STATE, AS ONE NIGERIEN OPPOSITION PARTY OFFICIAL HAS POINTED OUT. MOREOVER, THE SPREAD OF LIBYAN INFLUENCE IS ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL BENEFIT FOR A NUMBER OF NIGERIEN INDIVIDUALS, THAT PERHAPS DOES NOT SHOW UP ON THEIR GROSS INCOME STATEMENTS.

¶8. FINALLY, DESPITE THE UNQUESTIONED PRESENCE OF NIGERIEN DISSIDENTS IN LIBYA OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS, ESPECIALLY AMONG TUAREGS, THE GON HAS BEEN UNABLE TO COME UP WITH ANY RECENT EVIDENCE OF DIRECT LIBYAN ASSISTANCE TO ANY DISSIDENT GROUPS IN NIGER.

¶9. IN OUR VIEW, AS LONG AS THE NIGERIENS LACK CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF UNSAVORY LIBYAN ACTIVITIES WITHIN THEIR BORDERS, AND AS LONG AS THE LIBYANS CONTINUE TO ADD TO THE NATIONAL WEALTH, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THE GON TO CLAMP DOWN ON THE LIBYAN PRESENCE. MOREOVER, WE CANNOT COUNT ON THE PROLIFERATION OF PARTIES AND AN EVENTUAL CHANGE IN REGIME TO CREATE A NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD LIBYA, SINCE QADDHAFI IS LIKELY TO BUY INTO RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NEW POLITICAL PARTIES AND POWER CENTERS, IF HE HAS NOT ALREADY DONE SO. WE HAVE VERY LIMITED MEANS OF COUNTERING THAT KIND OF EFFORT.

NEED TO LAY DOWN MARKERS WITH GON, PARTIES, UNIONS

¶10. THE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH WE CAN TAKE TO MINIMIZE LIBYAN INFLUENCE IN NIGER IS TO CONTINUE TO LAY DOWN MARKERS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND NOW WITH OTHER POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS (PARTIES, UNIONS, ETC.) ABOUT LIBYA'S DESTRUCTIVE POLICIES IN AFRICA. WE SHOULD PROVIDE CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF LIBYAN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES, ESPECIALLY IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, AS WE HAVE DONE HERE IN THE PAST REGARDING BURKINA FASO, CHAD, AND BENIN. MALI IS ANOTHER COUNTRY IN WHICH THE POTENTIAL FOR GROWING LIBYAN INFLUENCE (AS EMBASSY BAMAKO HAS ARGUED) IS OF DIRECT SIGNIFICANCE, GIVEN THE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS IN MALI AND NIGER OF RESTIVE TUAREG POPULATIONS AND POVERTY-STRICKEN, NASCENT DEMOCRACIES RIPE FOR LIBYAN EXPLOITATION.

COUNTERING THE "BENEFITS" OF THE LIBYAN PRESENCE

¶11. TO COUNTER NIGERIEN PROPENSITY TO SEE THE BENEFITS OF THE LIBYAN PRESENCE, WE SHOULD MAKE AN EFFORT TO DRAW PARALLELS FOR THE NIGERIENS ABOUT HOW CERTAIN LIBYAN ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGER COULD POTENTIALLY WORK AGAINST NIGER'S INTERESTS, ESPECIALLY BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

¶12. BRIEFERS FROM WASHINGTON COULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IN THESE TASKS, BUT WE SHOULD WAIT AT LEAST UNTIL A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IS IN PLACE, IF WE EXPECT TO REACH POLICY MAKERS AND OPINION SETTERS.. MOREOVER, OUR BRIEFINGS SHOULD NOT DWELL AT LENGTH ON LIBYAN CW POLICY, SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN TERRORISM, OR OTHER ISSUES marginally RELEVANT TO NIGER'S CONCERNS. WE SHOULD BE AS NIGER-SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE, IF WE WANT TO HAVE AN EVENTUAL IMPACT.

